attractive include the facility to convert the entire export earnings at market rate of exchange, delegation and decentralisation of powers and simplification of policy/procedures.

Non Payment of salaries to Employees of M.T.C.

737. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 1,000 workers of the Mica Trading Corporation of India Limited have not been getting their salaries since November, 1992;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps are being taken to pay their salaries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Due to acute financial constraints, MITCO has not been able to pay the salaries of its employees since November, 1992. The case of MITCO has been referred to BIFR as a sick industrial company for a decision on the future of the company.

US Investigation against Indian Exporters

738. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US administration has decided to launch anti-dumping investigations against twenty Indian exporters of steel flanges; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The US administration has decided to launch anti-dumping investigations in response to an anti-dumping petition against import of steel flanges from India. Fourteen Indian exporters of steel flanges have been named in the petition.

(b) The US International Trade Commission has made a preliminary affirmative determination in the case on 9 Februray, 1993. A similar determination has been made in respect of steel flanges imported from Taiwan. No anti-dumping duties are imposed at this stage. As a result of the ITC's determination, the US Department of Commerce will continue to conduct anti-dumping investigations in the case.

A general protectionist trend has been discerned in the USA and this is manifested by increased reliance placed on anti-dumping and countervailing duty actions.

Promoting Exports

739. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:
SHRI IQBAL SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of India's exports and imports during the first nine months of the current financial year;

(b) what is the manner in which these compare with those of the same period of the last two years; and

(c) the details of steps taken by Government to increase exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The details of India's exports and imports during the first nine months i.e. April-December, 1992-93 as compared with those of the same period during 1990-91 and 1991-92 are as under:—

(Value : Rs. Crores)

April-Dec. 1990-91	April-Dec. 1991-92	April-Dec. 1992-93
23189	30332	37329
31724	34238	47480

(c) Several changes in trade policy were introduced since July, 1991 aimed at strengthening export incentives, eliminating a substantial volume of import licensing and retionalising the import tariff structure. Rupee has been made partially convertible to encourage generation of foreign exchange. These have been further consolidated in the new Export-Import Policy which, *inter-alia*, aims to promote productivity,

modernisation and competitiveness of Indian industry and thereby to enhance its export capabilities. A short-term Action Plan for ensuring the revival of the export momentum has been formulated. Besides, 34 commodities have been identified as 'extreme focus' sectors aimed at value or volume increase of 30% every year, in exports.

Commodities Identified for Export

740. SHRI IQBAL SINGH:
SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have identified certain commodities as "Thrust' commodities for export;

(b) if so, what are the details of these commodities; and

(c) the details of the steps taken/ proposed to be taken by Government to increase export of these commodities?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Government have identified 34 commodities/commodity groups called 'Extreme Focus Products' for a special export thrust, based on their potential to achieve a 30% growth per annum over the medium term.

(b) These commodities/commodity Groups are aquaculture, agrochemicals, auto components, bicycles and parts, cement, complete vehicles, drugs and pharmaceuticals, dyes and intermediates, electric power generation and distribution equipment, floriculture, footwear, fresh fruits, gold jewellery, granite, handtools internal combustion engines and parts, industrial castings and forginings, tomato paste products, tropical fruit juices, pulp & concentrates, preserved mushrooms, readymade garments, rice, software, packages, system software, network computer aided design/computer aided manufacture, spices, sugar, molasses, alcohol including ethyl, alcohol, sugar machinery, synthetic and man-made textiles, and tyres.

(c) To increase exports of these commodities, the Government have examined the recommendations made by trade groups in respect of these commodities and several decisions have already been taken which include reduction in interest rate on export credit, directions to commercial banks to increase the availability of credit to the export sector, opening up Inland Container Depots and Container Freight Stations to the private sector, extending testing facilities for packaging materials in the country, simplification of procedures relating to bank guarantees for fulfilment of export obligations, etc.

741. [*Transferred to 4th March*, 1993.]

Indo-European Communities Trade Relations

742. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a vast scope for the establishment of Indo-European communities economic and trade relations;

(b) if so, the possibility explored in that direction so far; and

(c) what steps are contemplated in this regard during the Eighth Five Year Plan period?;

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) India has well established economic and trade relations with the European Economic Community and the countries comprised therein. These are periodically reviewed in Joint Commission meetings, regular bilateral discussions at official and Ministerial level, exchange of trade and industry delegations, participation in trade fairs, exhibitions, seminars, training programmes and buyer-seller meets.

STRATEGY FOR FASTER GROWTH OF TEA INDUSTRY

743. MISS. SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have worked out a strategy for the faster growth of tea industry and a higher exportable surplus of tea; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?